CLAIMS

1 1. A method of providing help to people with
2 disabilities, comprising the steps:
3 a) organizing a network of people with disabilities and
4 of volunteers for helping people with disabilities, each
5 of the persons with disabilities and each of the
6 volunteers having a portable wireless communications
7 device;
8 b) establishing a database having information about the
9 people with disabilities and about the volunteers;
10 c) at least one of the persons with disabilities, using
11 one of the wireless communications devices to transmit a
12 request for help; and
13 d) at least one of the volunteers receiving the request
14 for help via one of the wireless communications devices.

1 2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein:
2 step (c) includes the step of one of the persons with
3 disabilities using one of the wireless communications
4 devices to transmit a request for help to the network;
5 further comprising the step of the network searching the
6 information in the database to match one of the
7 volunteers with said request; and
8 step (d) includes the step of the network identifying
9 said one of the persons with disabilities to said one of
10 the volunteers via one of the wireless communications
11 devices.

3. A method according to Claim 2, further comprising the
step of, the volunteers providing at least one service
selected from the group comprising:
i) reading a newspaper or other information to a blind
person,
ii) translating a conversation into sign language, and
iii) bringing requested items to one of the persons with
disabilities.

4. A method according to Claim 2, further comprising the
step of using a global positioning system to identify the
location of said one of the persons with disabilities,
and to identify one or more of the volunteers in the
vicinity of said one of the persons with disabilities.

5. A method according to Claim 2, wherein:
the step of establishing a database includes the steps of
i) establishing a first database having information about
the persons with disabilities, and
ii) establishing a second database having information
about the volunteers; and
the searching step includes the step of the network
searching the first and second databases to select and
match volunteers and people with disabilities.

6. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the searching
step includes the step of:
using a matching server to search the people with
disabilities and the volunteers to find a list of
candidate volunteers and methods of help;

6   sending a request to each of the candidate volunteers;

7   interacting with the candidate volunteers to find a final

8   choice volunteer; and

9   sending a final request to the final choice volunteer.

1   7. A system for providing help to people with

2   disabilities, comprising:

3   a network of people with disabilities and of volunteers

4   for helping people with disabilities, each of the persons

5   with disabilities and each of the volunteers having a

6   portable, wireless communications device; and

7   a database having information about the people with

8   disabilities and about the volunteers;

9   at least one of the persons with disabilities using one

10   of the wireless communications devices to transmit a

11   request for help; and

12   at least one of the volunteers receiving the request for

13   help via one of the wireless communications devices.

1   8. A system according to Claim 7, wherein:

2   one of the persons with disabilities uses one of the

3   wireless communications devices to transmit a request for

4   help to the network;

5   the network includes

6   i) means for searching the information in the database to

7   match one of the volunteers with said request, and

8   ii) means for identifying said one of the persons with

9   disabilities to said one of the volunteers via one of the

10   wireless communications devices.

1 9. A system according to Claim 8, wherein the volunteers
2 provide at least one service selected from the group
3 comprising:
4 i) reading a newspaper or other information to a blind
5 person,
6 ii) translating a conversation into sign language, and
7 iii) bringing requested items to one of the persons with
8 disabilities.

1 10. A system according to Claim 8, further comprising a
2 global positioning system to identify the location of
3 said one of the persons with disabilities, and to
4 identify one or more of the volunteers in the vicinity of
5 said one of the persons with disabilities.

1 11. A system according to Claim 8, wherein:
2 the database includes
3 i) a first database having information about the persons
4 with disabilities, and
5 ii) a second database having information about the
6 volunteers; and
7 the searching means includes means for searching the
8 first and second databases to select and match volunteers
9 and people with disabilities.

1 12. A system according to Claim 8, wherein the searching
2 means includes:
3 a matching server to search the people with disabilities
4 and the volunteers to find a list of candidate volunteers
5 and methods of help;

6   means for sending a request to each of the candidate

7   volunteers;

8   means for interacting with the candidate volunteers to

9   find a final choice volunteer; and

10   means for sending a final request to the final choice

11   volunteer.

1   13. A program storage device readable by machine,

2   tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable

3   by the machine to perform method steps for providing help

4   to people with disabilities, said method steps

5   comprising:

6   a) organizing a network of people with disabilities and

7   of volunteers for helping people with disabilities, each

8   of the persons with disabilities and each of the

9   volunteers having a portable, wireless communications

10   device;

11   b) establishing a database having information about the

12   people with disabilities and about the volunteers;

13   c) at least one of the persons with disabilities, using

14   one of the wireless communications devices to transmit a

15   request for help; and

16   d) at least one of the volunteers receiving the request

17   for help via one of the wireless communications devices.

1   14. A program storage device according to Claim 13,

2   wherein:

3   step (c) includes the step of one of the persons with

4   disabilities using one of the wireless communications

5   devices to transmit a request for help to the network;

6 further comprising the step of the network searching the
7 information in the database to match one of the
8 volunteers with said request; and
9 step (d) includes the step of the network identifying
10 said one of the persons with disabilities to said one of
11 the volunteers via one of the wireless communications
12 devices.

1 15. A program storage device according to Claim 14,
2 wherein said method steps further comprise the step of,
3 the volunteers providing at least one service selected
4 from the group comprising:
5 i) reading a newspaper or other information to a blind
6 person,
7 ii) translating a conversation into sign language, and
8 iii) bringing requested items to one of the persons with
9 disabilities.

1 16. A program storage device according to Claim 14,
2 wherein said method steps further comprise the step of
3 using a global positioning system to identify the
4 location of said one of the persons with disabilities,
5 and to identify one or more of the volunteers in the
6 vicinity of said one of the persons with disabilities.

1 17. A program storage device according to Claim 14,
2 wherein:
3 the step of establishing a database includes the steps of
4 i) establishing a first database having information about
5 the persons with disabilities, and

6   ii) establishing a second database having information

7   about the volunteers; and

8   the searching step includes the step of the network

9   searching the first and second databases to select and

10   match volunteers and people with disabilities.

1   18. A program storage devic according to Claim 14,

2   wherein the searching step includes the step of:

3   using a matching server to search the people with

4   disabilities and the volunteers to find a list of

5   candidate volunteers and methods of help;

6   sending a request to each of the candidate volunteers;

7   interacting with the candidate volunteers to find a final

8   choice volunteer; and

9   sending a final request to the final choice volunteer.